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Payne et al.

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(54) **REPLACEABLE UNIT FOR AN ELECTROPHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE FORMING DEVICE HAVING POSITIONING FEATURES FOR ELECTRICAL CONTACTS**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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(51) **Int. Cl.**

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G03G 15/08	(2006.01)
G03G 21/18	(2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***G03G 15/0877*** (2013.01); ***G03G 21/1867*** (2013.01); ***G03G 21/1871*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC G03G 15/0877; G03G 21/1871; G03G 21/1867
See application file for complete search history.

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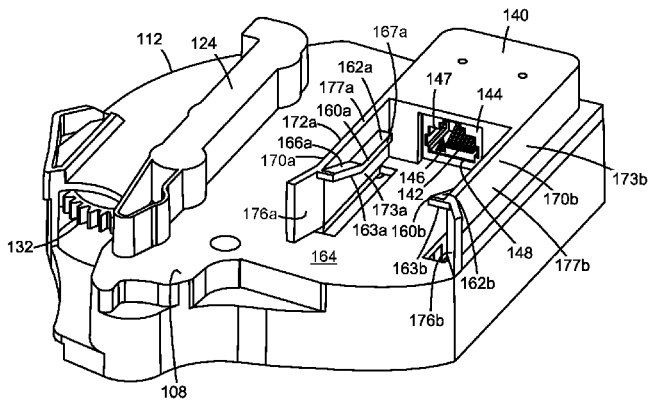
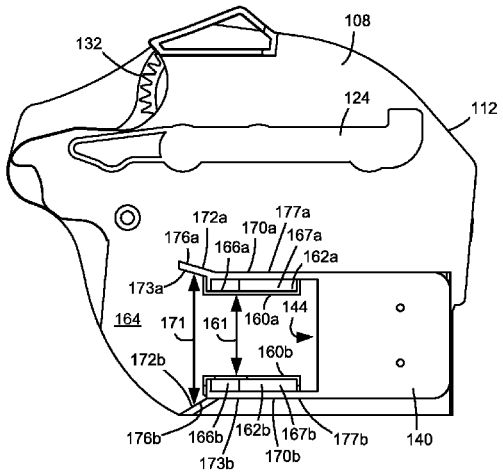
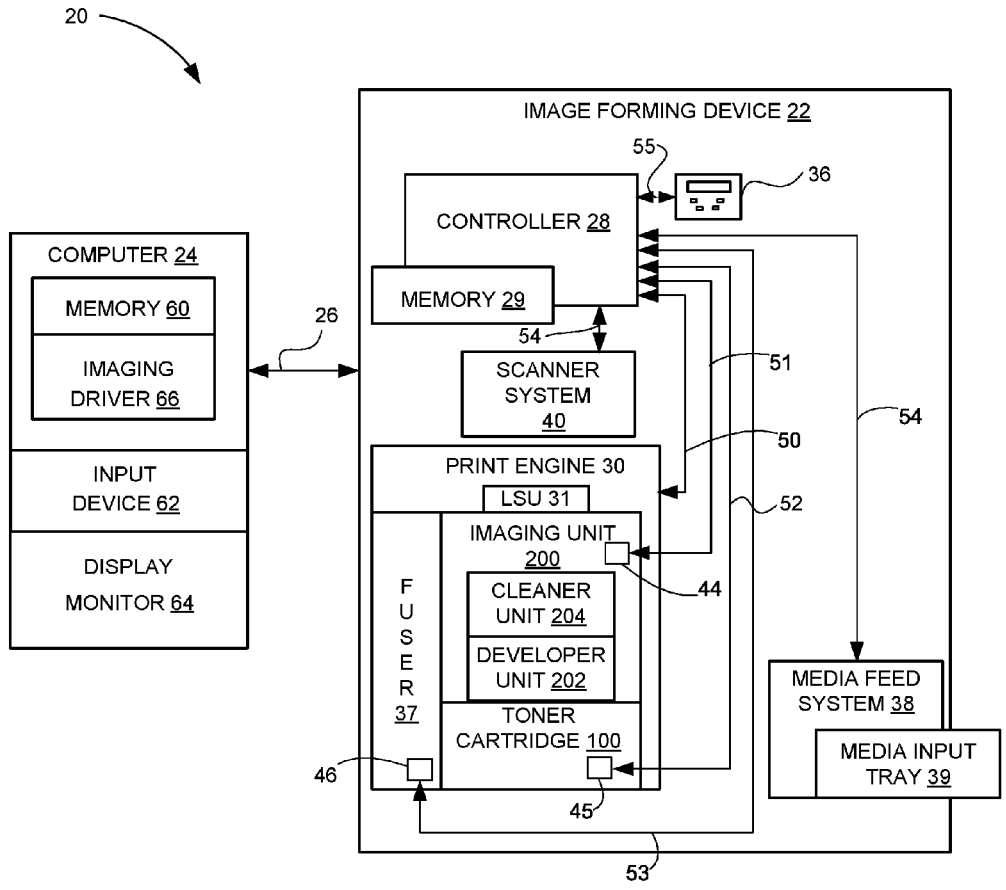
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A replaceable unit for an electrophotographic image forming device according to one example embodiment includes an electrical contact positioned on a first side of a housing of the replaceable unit for contacting an electrical contact in the image forming device. A guide on the first side of the housing is positioned closer to a front of the housing than the electrical contact and leads rearward toward the electrical contact. The guide includes an inside surface that faces inward sideways toward a second side of the housing. At least a portion of the inside surface is angled inward sideways from front to rear permitting contact between the inside surface and an electrical connector in the image forming device to draw the electrical connector in the image forming device inward sideways relative to the replaceable unit during insertion of the replaceable unit into the image forming device.

4 Claims, 11 Drawing Sheets



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CONTROLLER 28
COMPUTER 24
MEMORY 60
IMAGING DRIVER 66
INPUT DEVICE 62
DISPLAY MONITOR 64
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MEMORY 29
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SCANNER SYSTEM 40
51
54
50
PRINT ENGINE 30
LSU 31
52
IMAGING UNIT 200
44
CLEANER UNIT 204
DEVELOPER UNIT 202
TONER CARTRIDGE 100
FUSER 37
MEDIA FEED SYSTEM 38
MEDIA INPUT TRAY 39
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FIGURE 1

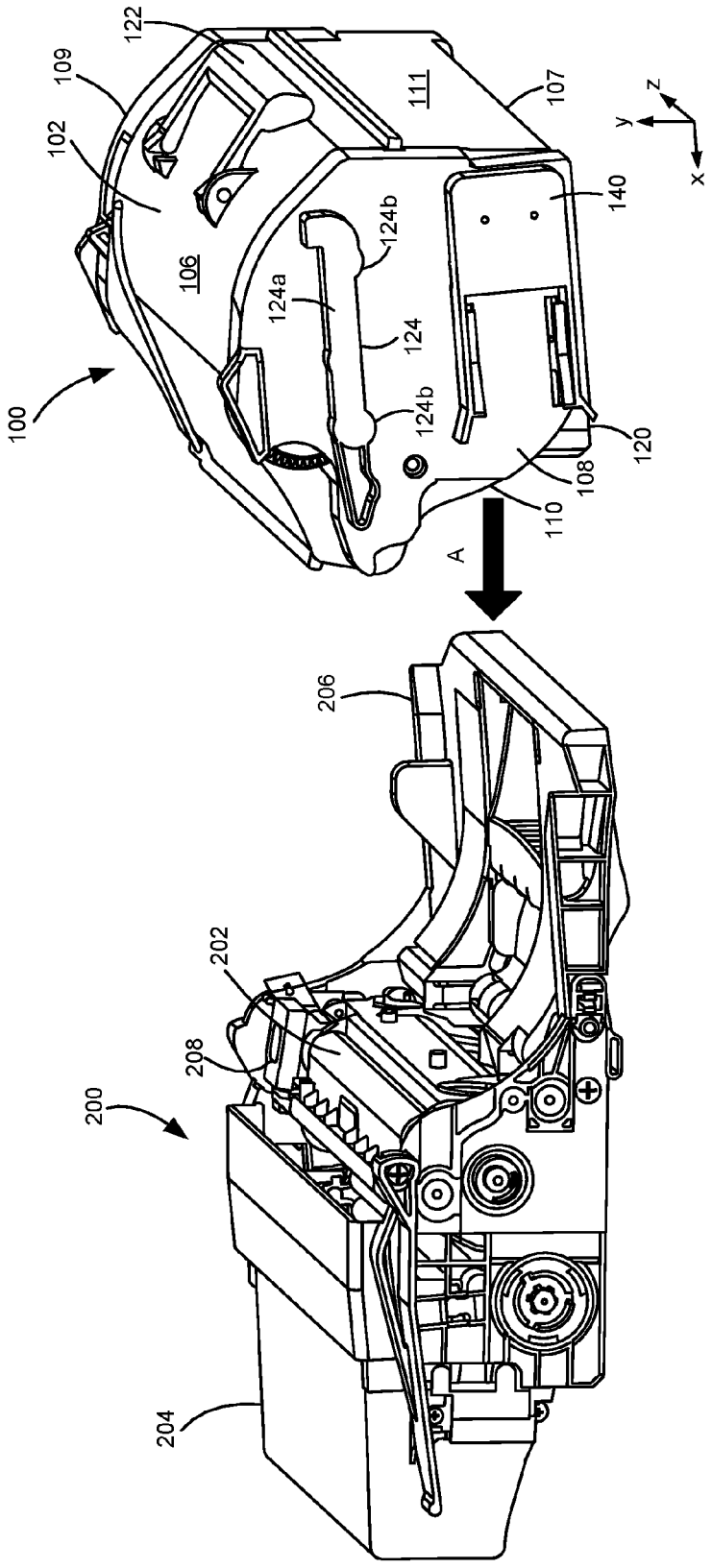
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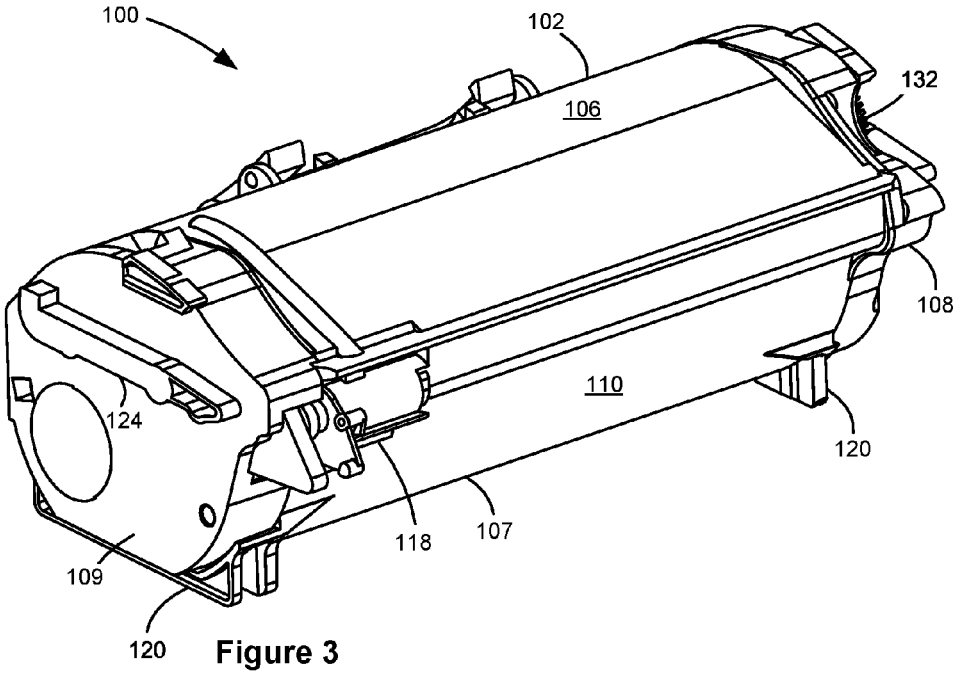
Figure 2



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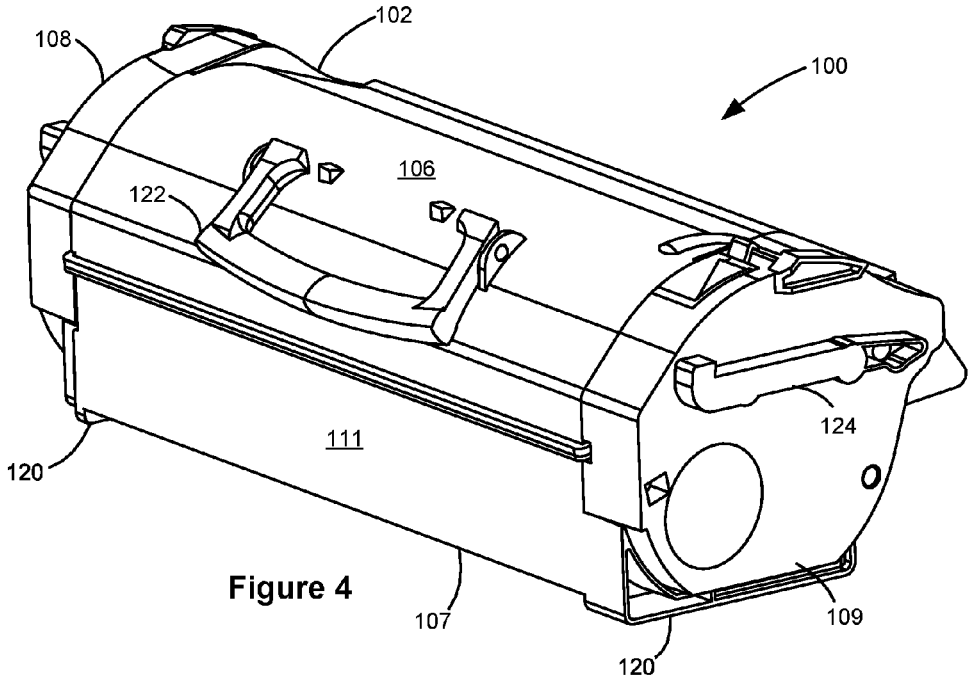

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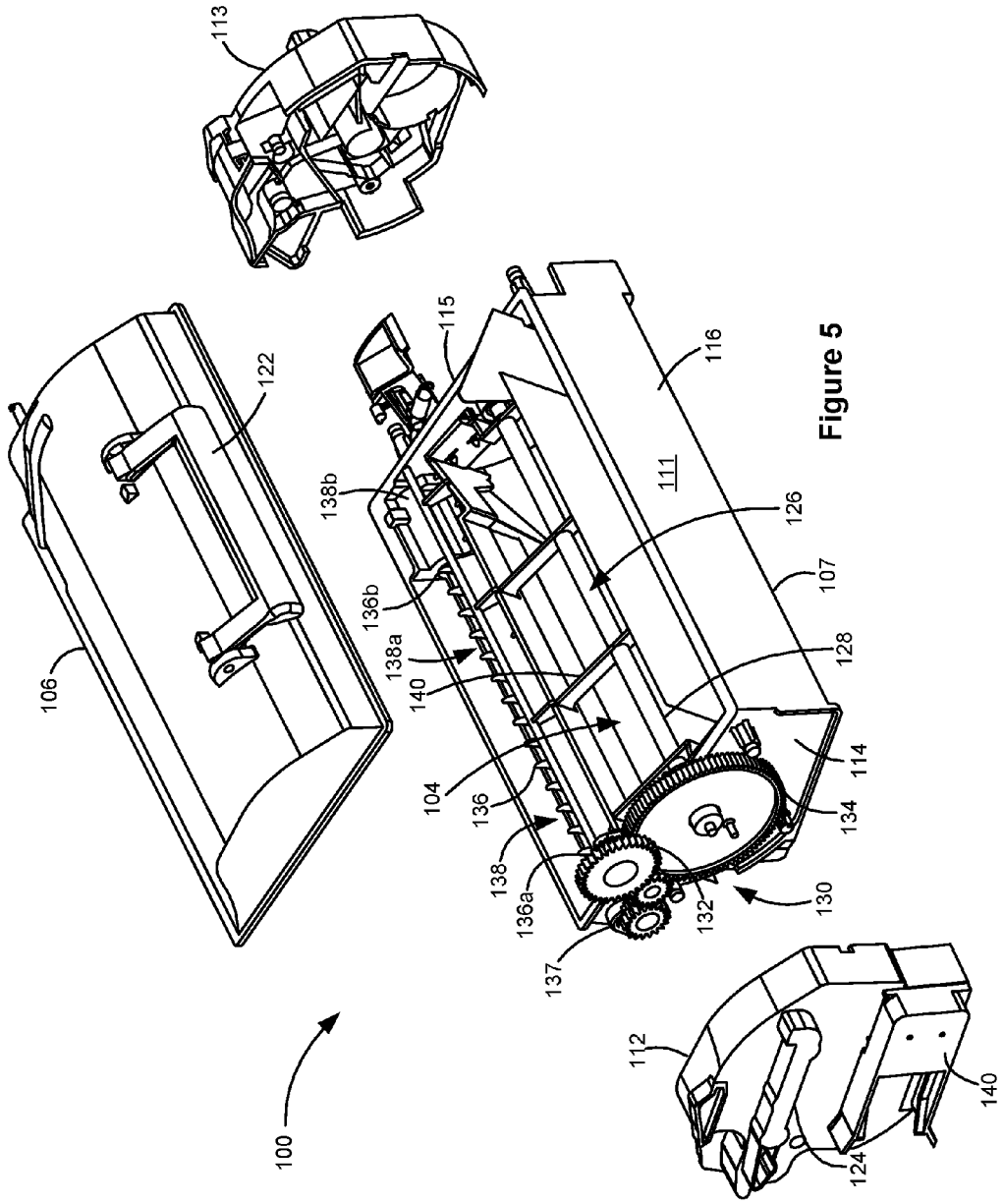
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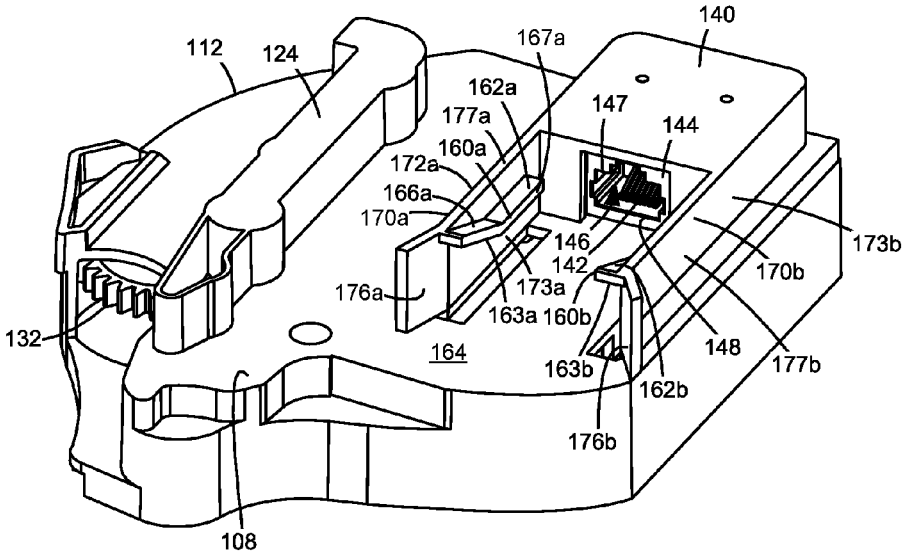
Figure 5



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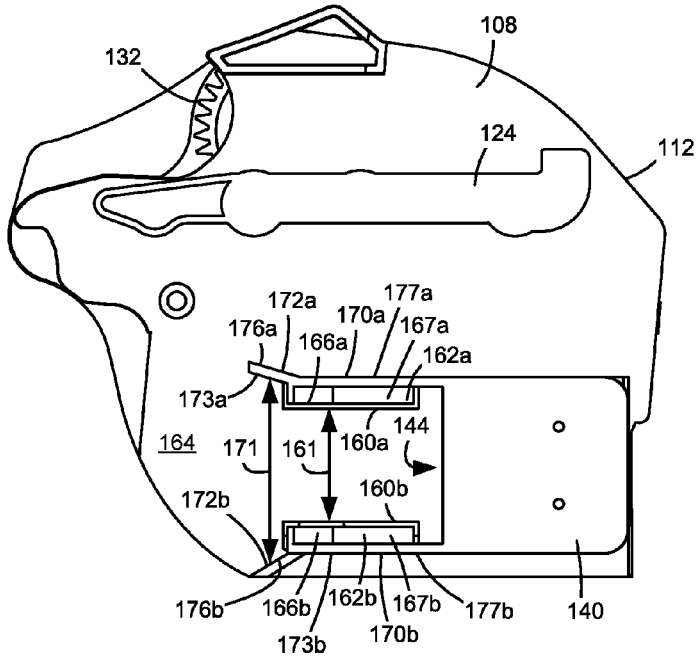

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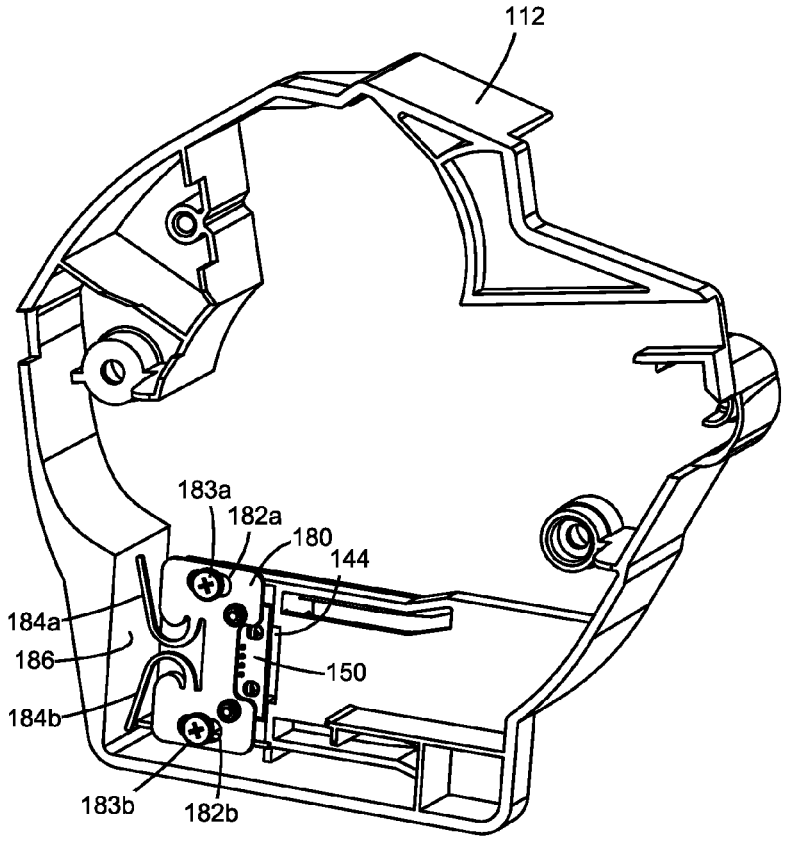

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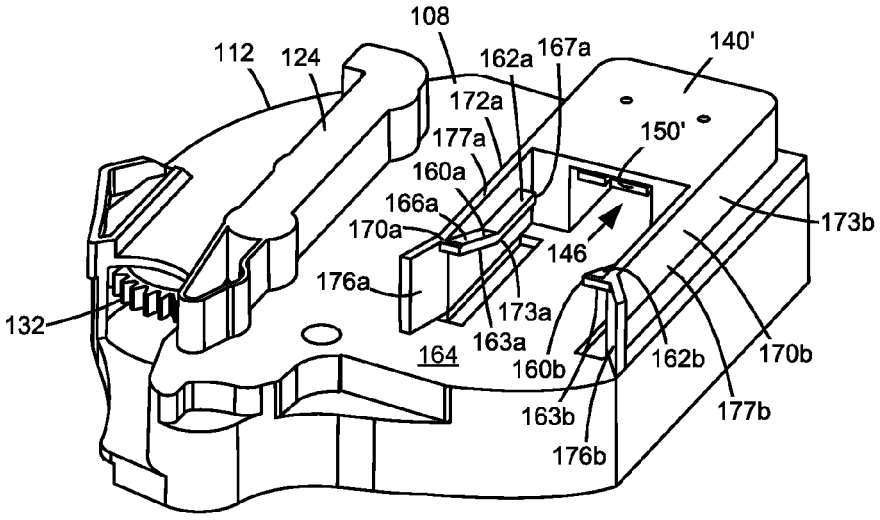

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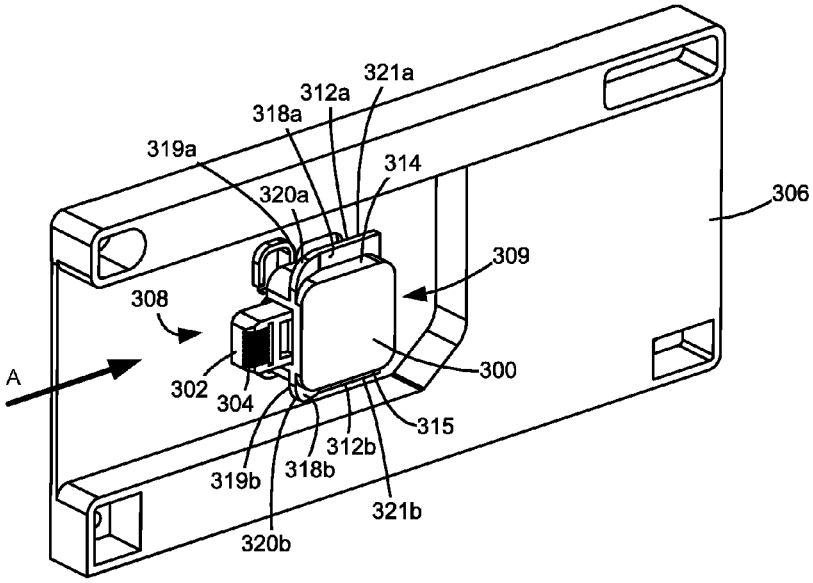

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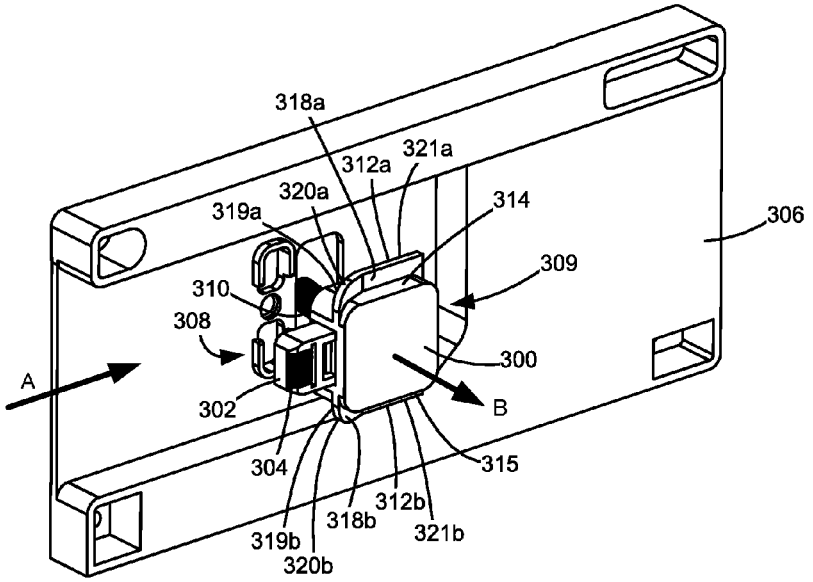

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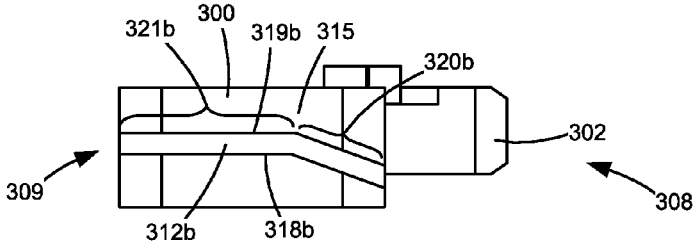

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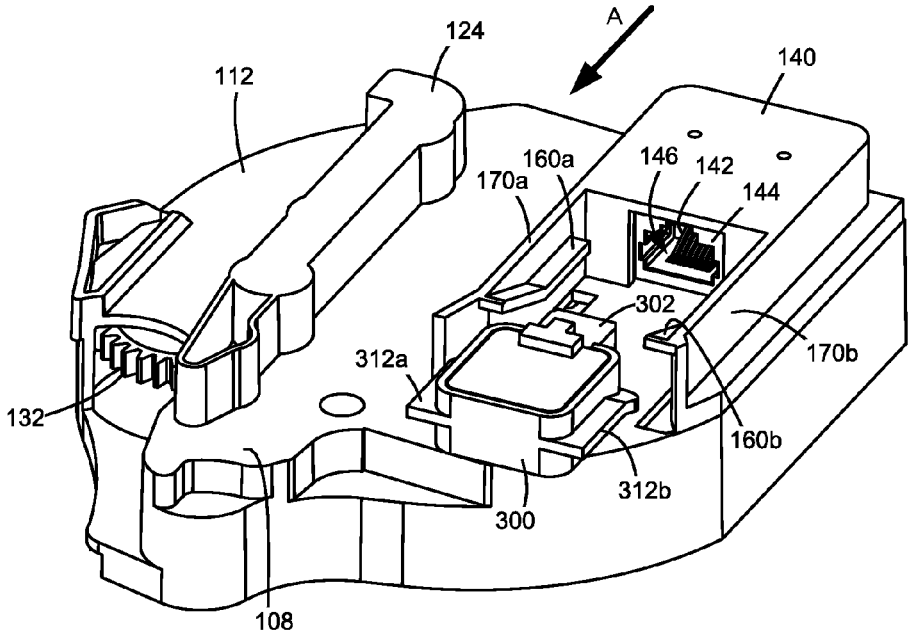

Figure 13A

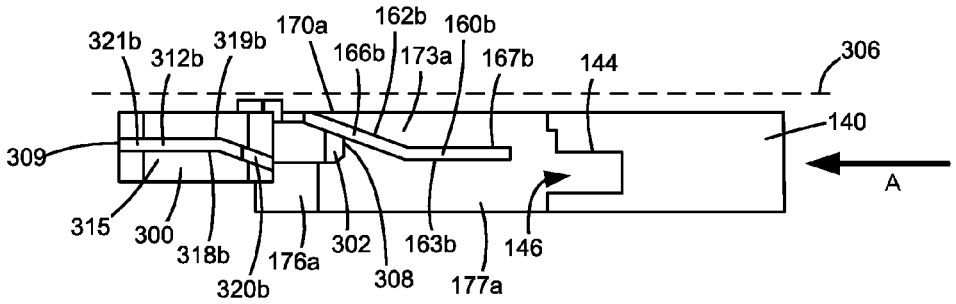

Figure 13B

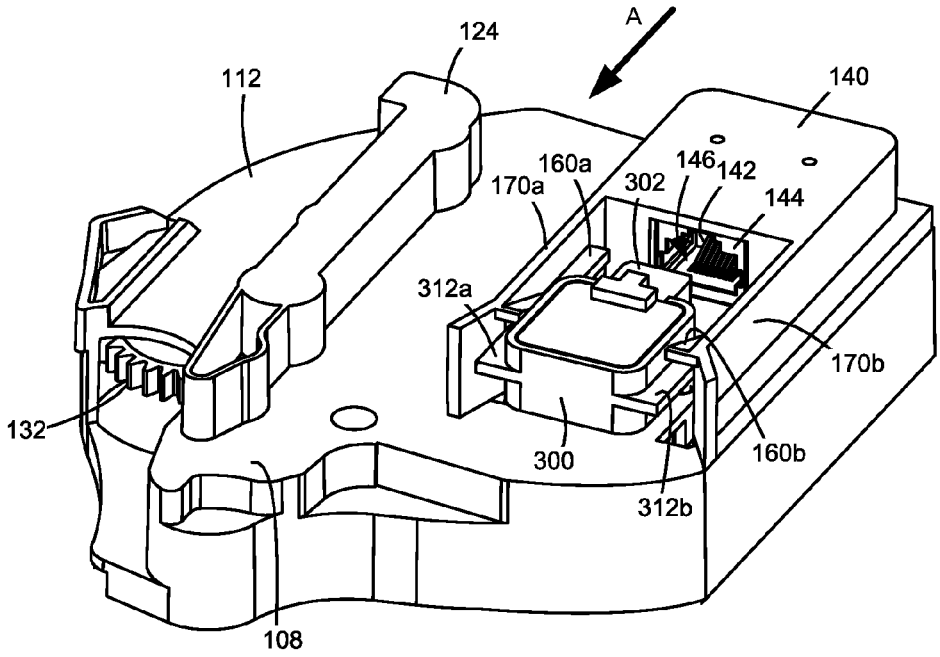

Figure 14A

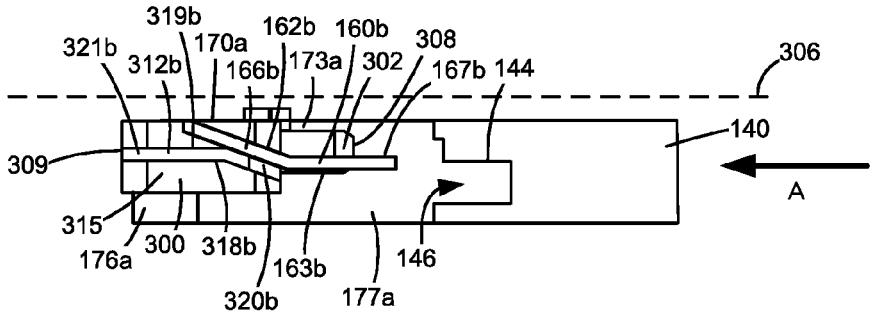

Figure 14B

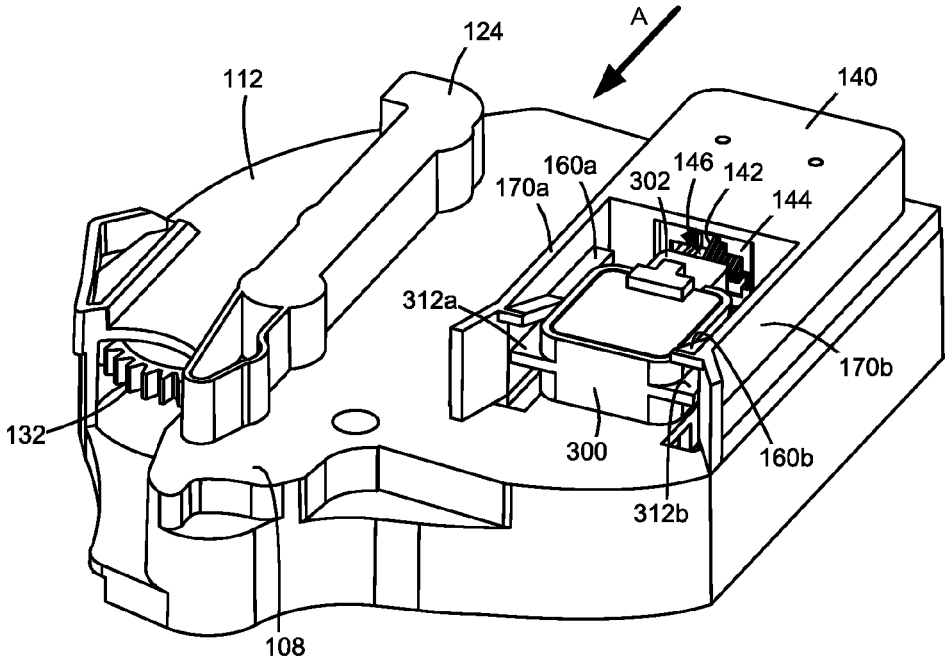

Figure 15A

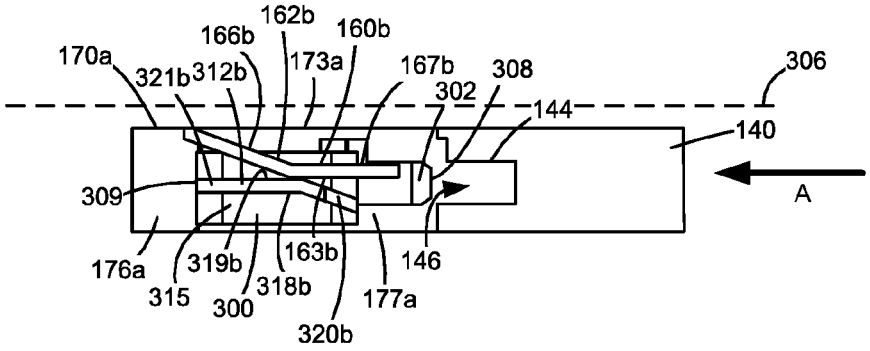

Figure 15B

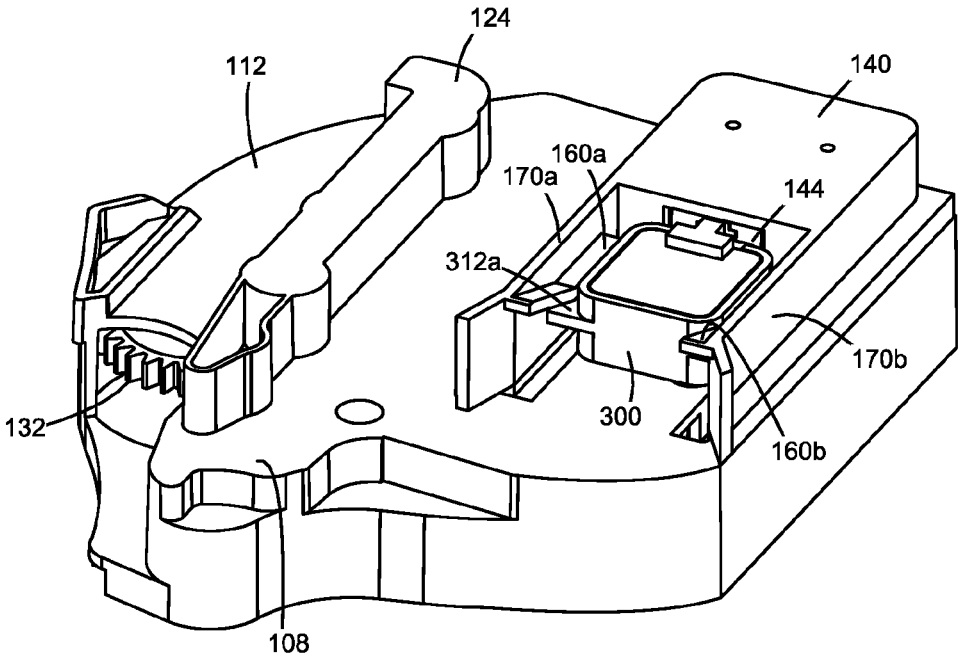

Figure 16A

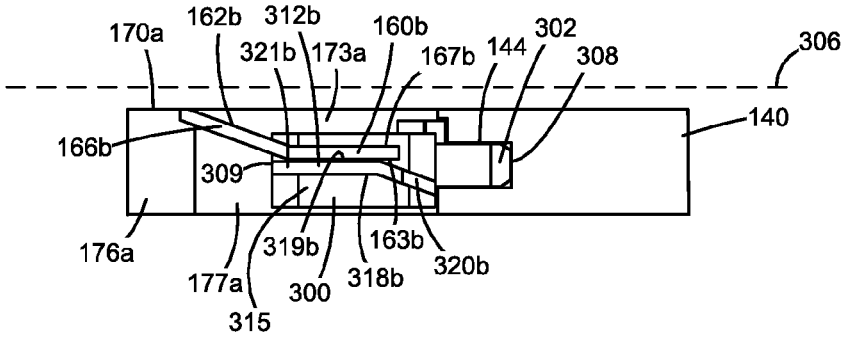

Figure 16B

REPLACEABLE UNIT FOR AN ELECTROPHOTOGRAPHIC IMAGE FORMING DEVICE HAVING POSITIONING FEATURES FOR ELECTRICAL CONTACTS

CROSS REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This patent application is a continuation application of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/854,298, filed Sep. 15, 2015, entitled "Replaceable Unit for an Electrophotographic Image Forming Device Having Positioning Features for Electrical Contacts."

BACKGROUND

1. Field of the Disclosure

The present disclosure relates generally to image forming devices and more particularly to a replaceable unit for an electrophotographic image forming device having positioning features for electrical contacts.

2. Description of the Related Art

During the electrophotographic printing process, an electrically charged rotating photoconductive drum is selectively exposed to a laser beam. The areas of the photoconductive drum exposed to the laser beam are discharged creating an electrostatic latent image of a page to be printed on the photoconductive drum. Toner particles are then electrostatically picked up by the latent image on the photoconductive drum creating a toned image on the drum. The toned image is transferred to the print media (e.g., paper) either directly by the photoconductive drum or indirectly by an intermediate transfer member. The toner is then fused to the media using heat and pressure to complete the print.

The image forming device's toner supply is typically stored in one or more replaceable units that have a shorter lifespan than the image forming device. It is desired to communicate various operating parameters and usage information of the replaceable unit(s) to the image forming device for proper operation. For example, it may be desired to communicate such information as replaceable unit serial number, replaceable unit type, toner color, toner capacity, amount of toner remaining, license information, etc. The replaceable unit(s) typically include processing circuitry configured to communicate with and respond to commands from a controller in the image forming device. The replaceable unit(s) also include memory associated with the processing circuitry that stores program instructions and information related to the replaceable unit. The processing circuitry and associated memory are typically mounted on a circuit board that is attached to the replaceable unit. The replaceable unit also includes one or more electrical contacts that mate with corresponding electrical contacts in the image forming device upon installation of the replaceable unit in the image forming device in order to facilitate communication between the processing circuitry of the replaceable unit and the controller of the image forming device. It is important to accurately position the electrical contacts of the replaceable unit relative to the corresponding electrical contacts of the image forming device in order to ensure a reliable connection between the processing circuitry of the replaceable unit and the controller of the image forming device when the replaceable unit is installed in the image forming device.

Accordingly, positioning features that provide precise alignment of the electrical contacts of the replaceable unit with corresponding electrical contacts of the image forming device are desired.

SUMMARY

A replaceable unit for an electrophotographic image forming device according to one example embodiment includes a housing having a top, a bottom, a front, and a rear positioned between a first side and a second side of the housing. The housing has a reservoir for holding toner. An electrical contact is positioned on the first side of the housing for contacting a corresponding electrical contact in the image forming device when the replaceable unit is installed in the image forming device. A guide on the first side of the housing is positioned closer to the front of the housing than the electrical contact and leads rearward toward the electrical contact. The guide includes an inside surface that faces inward sideways toward the second side of the housing. The inside surface is unobstructed permitting the inside surface to contact an electrical connector in the image forming device during insertion of the replaceable unit into the image forming device. At least a portion of the inside surface is angled inward sideways in a direction from the front to the rear permitting contact between the inside surface and the electrical connector in the image forming device to draw the electrical connector in the image forming device inward sideways relative to the replaceable unit during insertion of the replaceable unit into the image forming device with the front of the housing leading.

In some embodiments, the electrical contact is positioned within a pocket on the first side of the housing. The pocket includes a frontward facing opening permitting the electrical connector in the image forming device to enter the pocket when the replaceable unit is installed in the image forming device. In some embodiments, the guide includes a first guide and a second guide. The first guide is spaced above the second guide with a gap between the first guide and the second guide. The inside surface includes a first inside surface on the first guide and a second inside surface on the second guide. Some embodiments include a vertical guide on the first side of the housing positioned closer to the front of the housing than the electrical contact and leading rearward toward the electrical contact. The vertical guide is unobstructed permitting the vertical guide to contact the electrical connector in the image forming device during insertion of the replaceable unit into the image forming device. In some embodiments, the vertical guide includes a top guide and a bottom guide. The top guide is spaced above the bottom guide with a gap between the top guide and the bottom guide. The top guide includes a bottom surface that faces a top surface of the bottom guide. The bottom surface of the top guide and the top surface of the bottom guide are unobstructed permitting the bottom surface of the top guide and the top surface of the bottom guide to contact the electrical connector in the image forming device during insertion of the replaceable unit into the image forming device. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the bottom surface of the top guide is angled downward in the direction from the front to the rear and at least a portion of the top surface of the bottom guide is angled upward in the direction from the front to the rear permitting contact between the bottom surface of the top guide and the electrical connector in the image forming device and between the top surface of the bottom guide and the electrical connector in the image forming device to align the electrical

connector in the image forming device vertically during insertion of the replaceable unit into the image forming device.

A replaceable unit for an electrophotographic image forming device according to another example embodiment includes a housing having a top, a bottom, a front, and a rear positioned between a first side and a second side of the housing. The housing has a reservoir for holding toner. An electrical contact is positioned on the first side of the housing for contacting a corresponding electrical contact in the image forming device when the replaceable unit is installed in the image forming device. The electrical contact is electrically connected to processing circuitry mounted on the housing. A first and a second guide are positioned on the first side of the housing. Each of the first and second guides is positioned closer to the front of the housing than the electrical contact and leads rearward toward the electrical contact. The first guide is spaced above the second guide with a gap between the first guide and the second guide. The first guide includes a first inside surface and the second guide includes a second inside surface. The first and second inside surfaces face inward sideways toward an outer side surface of the first side of the housing. The first and second inside surfaces are spaced outward sideways from the outer side surface of the first side of the housing with a gap between each of the first and second inside surfaces and the outer side surface of the first side of the housing. At least a portion of each of the first and second inside surfaces is angled inward sideways in a direction from the front to the rear.

In some embodiments, the electrical contact is positioned within a pocket on the first side of the housing. The pocket includes a frontward facing opening permitting the electrical connector in the image forming device to enter the pocket when the replaceable unit is installed in the image forming device. Some embodiments include a top vertical guide and a bottom vertical guide on the first side of the housing each positioned closer to the front of the housing than the electrical contact and leading rearward toward the electrical contact. The top vertical guide is spaced above the bottom vertical guide with a gap between the top vertical guide and the bottom vertical guide. The top vertical guide includes a bottom surface that faces a top surface of the bottom vertical guide. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the bottom surface of the top vertical guide is angled downward in the direction from the front to the rear and at least a portion of the top surface of the bottom vertical guide is angled upward in the direction from the front to the rear.

A toner cartridge according to one example embodiment includes a housing having a top, a bottom, a front, and a rear positioned between a first side and a second side of the housing. The housing has a reservoir for holding toner. An outlet port is in fluid communication with the reservoir and faces downward on the front of the housing for exiting toner from the toner cartridge. A channel runs along the front of the housing between the first side and the second side and is in fluid communication with the outlet port. At least a portion of the channel is open to the reservoir. An auger is positioned in the channel and extends along the front of the housing between the first side and the second side. The auger includes a rotational axis and is operative to move toner in the channel toward the outlet port. An electrical contact is positioned on the first side of the housing for contacting a corresponding electrical contact in the image forming device when the toner cartridge is installed in the image forming device. The electrical contact is electrically connected to processing circuitry mounted on the housing. A guide on the first side of the housing is positioned in front of and leads rearward toward the electrical contact. The guide includes an inside surface that faces axially inward relative to the rotational axis of the auger. The inside surface is unobstructed permitting the inside surface to contact an electrical connector in the image forming device during insertion of the toner cartridge into the image forming device. At least a portion of the inside surface is angled axially inward relative to the rotational axis of the auger in a direction from the front to the rear permitting contact between the inside surface and the electrical connector in the image forming device to draw the electrical connector in the image forming device axially inward relative to the rotational axis of the auger during insertion of the toner cartridge into the image forming device with the front of the housing leading.

In some embodiments, the electrical contact is positioned within a pocket on the first side of the housing. The pocket includes a frontward facing opening permitting the electrical connector in the image forming device to enter the pocket when the toner cartridge is installed in the image forming device. In some embodiments, the guide includes a first guide and a second guide. The first guide is spaced above the second guide with a gap between the first guide and the second guide. The inside surface includes a first inside surface on the first guide and a second inside surface on the second guide. Some embodiments include a vertical guide on the first side of the housing positioned in front of and leading rearward toward the electrical contact. The vertical guide is unobstructed permitting the vertical guide to contact the electrical connector in the image forming device during insertion of the toner cartridge into the image forming device. In some embodiments, the vertical guide includes a top guide and a bottom guide. The top guide is spaced above the bottom guide with a gap between the top guide and the bottom guide. The top guide includes a bottom surface that faces a top surface of the bottom guide. The bottom surface of the top guide and the top surface of the bottom guide are unobstructed permitting the bottom surface of the top guide and the top surface of the bottom guide to contact the electrical connector in the image forming device during insertion of the toner cartridge into the image forming device. In some embodiments, at least a portion of the bottom surface of the top guide is angled downward in the direction from the front to the rear and at least a portion of the top surface of the bottom guide is angled upward in the direction from the front to the rear permitting contact between the bottom surface of the top guide and the electrical connector in the image forming device and between the top surface of the bottom guide and the electrical connector in the image forming device to align the electrical connector in the image forming device vertically during insertion of the toner cartridge into the image forming device.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings incorporated in and forming a part of the specification, illustrate several aspects of the present disclosure, and together with the description serve to explain the principles of the present disclosure.

FIG. **1** is a block diagram of an imaging system according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **2** is a perspective view of a toner cartridge and an imaging unit according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **3** is a front perspective view of the toner cartridge shown in FIG. **2**.

FIG. **4** is a rear perspective view of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **2** and **3**.

FIG. **5** is an exploded view of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **2-4** showing a reservoir for holding toner therein.

FIG. **6** is a perspective view of an end cap of the toner cartridge showing an electrical connector according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **7** is a side elevation view of the toner cartridge shown in FIG. **6**.

FIG. **8** is a side elevation view of an inner side of the end cap of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **6** and **7** showing a printed circuit board mounted thereon according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **9** is a perspective view of an end cap of the toner cartridge showing an electrical connector according to a second example embodiment.

FIG. **10** is a perspective view of an electrical connector in an image forming device showing the electrical connector in its biased position according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **11** is a perspective view of the electrical connector shown in FIG. **10** showing the electrical connector pulled away from a frame of the image forming device counter to the bias on the electrical connector according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **12** is a bottom plan view of the electrical connector shown in FIGS. **10** and **11**.

FIG. **13**A is a perspective view of the end cap of the toner cartridge showing the position of the electrical connector of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **6-8** relative to the electrical connector in the image forming device shown in FIGS. **10-12** during insertion of the toner cartridge into the image forming device according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **13**B is a schematic view illustrating the position of the electrical connector in the image forming device relative to the electrical connector of the toner cartridge at the position of the toner cartridge shown in FIG. **13**A.

FIG. **14**A is a perspective view of the end cap of the toner cartridge showing the position of the electrical connector of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **6-8** relative to the electrical connector in the image forming device shown in FIGS. **10-12** as the toner cartridge advances further into the image forming device according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **14**B is a schematic view illustrating the position of the electrical connector in the image forming device relative to the electrical connector of the toner cartridge at the position of the toner cartridge shown in FIG. **14**A.

FIG. **15**A is a perspective view of the end cap of the toner cartridge showing the position of the electrical connector of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **6-8** relative to the electrical connector in the image forming device shown in FIGS. **10-12** as the toner cartridge nears its operative position in the image forming device according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **15**B is a schematic view illustrating the position of the electrical connector in the image forming device relative to the electrical connector of the toner cartridge at the position of the toner cartridge shown in FIG. **15**A.

FIG. **16**A is a perspective view of the end cap of the toner cartridge showing the position of the electrical connector of the toner cartridge shown in FIGS. **6-8** relative to the electrical connector in the image forming device shown in FIGS. **10-12** when the toner cartridge is fully installed in the image forming device according to one example embodiment.

FIG. **16**B is a schematic view illustrating the position of the electrical connector in the image forming device relative to the electrical connector of the toner cartridge at the position of the toner cartridge shown in FIG. **16**A.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description, reference is made to the accompanying drawings where like numerals represent like elements. The embodiments are described in sufficient detail to enable those skilled in the art to practice the present disclosure. It is to be understood that other embodiments may be utilized and that process, electrical, and mechanical changes, etc., may be made without departing from the scope of the present disclosure. Examples merely typify possible variations. Portions and features of some embodiments may be included in or substituted for those of others. The following description, therefore, is not to be taken in a limiting sense and the scope of the present disclosure is defined only by the appended claims and their equivalents.

Referring now to the drawings and particularly to FIG. **1**, there is shown a block diagram depiction of an imaging system **20** according to one example embodiment. Imaging system **20** includes an image forming device **22** and a computer **24**. Image forming device **22** communicates with computer **24** via a communications link **26**. As used herein, the term "communications link" generally refers to any structure that facilitates electronic communication between multiple components and may operate using wired or wireless technology and may include communications over the Internet.

In the example embodiment shown in FIG. **1**, image forming device **22** is a multifunction machine (sometimes referred to as an all-in-one (MO) device) that includes a controller **28**, a print engine **30**, a laser scan unit (LSU) **31**, an imaging unit **200**, a toner cartridge **100**, a user interface **36**, a media feed system **38**, a media input tray **39** and a scanner system **40**. Image forming device **22** may communicate with computer **24** via a standard communication protocol, such as for example, universal serial bus (USB), Ethernet or IEEE 802.xx. Image forming device **22** may be, for example, an electrophotographic printer/copier including an integrated scanner system **40** or a standalone electrophotographic printer.

Controller **28** includes a processor unit and associated electronic memory **29**. The processor may include one or more integrated circuits in the form of a microprocessor or central processing unit and may be formed as one or more Application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs). Memory **29** may be any volatile or non-volatile memory or combination thereof, such as, for example, random access memory (RAM), read only memory (ROM), flash memory and/or non-volatile RAM (NVRAM). Memory **29** may be in the form of a separate memory (e.g., RAM, ROM, and/or NVRAM), a hard drive, a CD or DVD drive, or any memory device in convenient for use with controller **28**. Controller **28** may be, for example, a combined printer and scanner controller.

In the example embodiment illustrated, controller **28** communicates with print engine **30** via a communications link **50**. Controller **28** communicates with imaging unit **200** and processing circuitry **44** thereon via a communications link **51**. Controller **28** communicates with toner cartridge **100** and processing circuitry **45** thereon via a communications link **52**. Controller **28** communicates with fuser **37** and processing circuitry **46** thereon via a communications link **53**. Controller **28** communicates with media feed system **38**

via a communications link **54**. Controller **28** communicates with scanner system **40** via a communications link **54**. User interface **36** is communicatively coupled to controller **28** via a communications link **55**. Controller **28** processes print and scan data and operates print engine **30** during printing and scanner system **40** during scanning. Processing circuitry **44**, **45**, **46** may provide authentication functions, safety and operational interlocks, operating parameters and usage information related to imaging unit **200**, toner cartridge **100** and fuser **37**, respectively. Each of processing circuitry **44**, **45**, **46** includes a processor unit and associated electronic memory. As discussed above, the processor may include one or more integrated circuits in the form of a microprocessor or central processing unit and may be formed as one or more Application-specific integrated circuits (ASICs). The memory may be any volatile or non-volatile memory or combination thereof or any memory device convenient for use with processing circuitry **44**, **45**, **46**.

Computer **24**, which is optional, may be, for example, a personal computer, including electronic memory **60**, such as RAM, ROM, and/or NVRAM, an input device **62**, such as a keyboard and/or a mouse, and a display monitor **64**. Computer **24** also includes a processor, input/output (I/O) interfaces, and may include at least one mass data storage device, such as a hard drive, a CD-ROM and/or a DVD unit (not shown). Computer **24** may also be a device capable of communicating with image forming device **22** other than a personal computer such as, for example, a tablet computer, a smartphone, or other electronic device.

In the example embodiment illustrated, computer **24** includes in its memory a software program including program instructions that function as an imaging driver **66**, e.g., printer/scanner driver software, for image forming device **22**. Imaging driver **66** is in communication with controller **28** of image forming device **22** via communications link **26**. Imaging driver **66** facilitates communication between image forming device **22** and computer **24**. One aspect of imaging driver **66** may be, for example, to provide formatted print data to image forming device **22**, and more particularly to print engine **30**, to print an image. Another aspect of imaging driver **66** may be, for example, to facilitate collection of scanned data from scanner system **40**.

In some circumstances, it may be desirable to operate image forming device **22** in a standalone mode. In the standalone mode, image forming device **22** is capable of functioning without computer **24**. Accordingly, all or a portion of imaging driver **66**, or a similar driver, may be located in controller **28** of image forming device **22** so as to accommodate printing and/or scanning functionality when operating in the standalone mode.

Print engine **30** includes a laser scan unit (LSU) **31**, toner cartridge **100**, imaging unit **200** and fuser **37**, all mounted within image forming device **22**. Imaging unit **200** is removably mounted in image forming device **22** and includes a developer unit **202** that houses a toner sump and a toner development system. In one embodiment, the toner development system utilizes what is commonly referred to as a single component development system. In this embodiment, the toner development system includes a toner adder roll that provides toner from the toner sump to a developer roll. A doctor blade provides a metered uniform layer of toner on the surface of the developer roll. In another embodiment, the toner development system utilizes what is commonly referred to as a dual component development system. In this embodiment, toner in the toner sump of developer unit **202** is mixed with magnetic carrier beads. The magnetic carrier heads may be coated with a polymeric film to provide triboelectric properties to attract toner to the carrier beads as the toner and the magnetic carrier beads are mixed in the toner sump. In this embodiment, developer unit **202** includes a magnetic roll that attracts the magnetic carrier beads having toner thereon to the magnetic roll through the use of magnetic fields. Imaging unit **200** also includes a cleaner unit **204** that houses a photoconductive drum and a waste toner removal system.

Toner cartridge **100** is removably mounted in imaging forming device **22** in a mating relationship with developer unit **202** of imaging unit **200**. An outlet port on toner cartridge **100** communicates with an inlet port on developer unit **202** allowing toner to be periodically transferred from toner cartridge **100** to resupply the toner sump in developer unit **202**.

The electrophotographic printing process is well known in the art and, therefore, is described briefly herein. During a printing operation, laser scan unit **31** creates a latent image on the photoconductive drum in cleaner unit **204**. Toner is transferred from the toner sump in developer unit **202** to the latent image on the photoconductive drum by the developer roll (in the case of a single component development system) or by the magnetic roll (in the case of a dual component development system) to create a toned image. The toned image is then transferred to a media sheet received by imaging unit **200** from media input tray **39** for printing. Toner may be transferred directly to the media sheet by the photoconductive drum or by an intermediate transfer member that receives the toner from the photoconductive drum. Toner remnants are removed from the photoconductive drum by the waste toner removal system. The toner image is bonded to the media sheet in fuser **37** and then sent to an output location or to one or more finishing options such as a duplexer, a stapler or a hole-punch.

Referring now to FIG. **2**, toner cartridge **100** and imaging unit **200** are shown according to one example embodiment. Imaging unit **200** includes a developer unit **202** and a cleaner unit **204** mounted on a common frame **206**. Developer unit **202** includes a toner inlet port **208** positioned to receive toner from toner cartridge **100**. As discussed above, imaging unit **200** and toner cartridge **100** are each removably installed in image forming device **22**. Imaging unit **200** is first slidably inserted into image forming device **22**. Toner cartridge **100** is then inserted into image forming device **22** and onto frame **206** in a mating relationship with developer unit **202** of imaging unit **200** as indicated by the arrow A shown in FIG. **2**, which also indicates the direction of insertion of imaging unit **200** and toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. This arrangement allows toner cartridge **100** to be removed and reinserted easily when replacing an empty toner cartridge **100** without having to remove imaging unit **200**. Imaging unit **200** may also be readily removed as desired in order to maintain, repair or replace the components associated with developer unit **202**, cleaner unit **204** or frame **206** or to clear a media jam.

With reference to FIGS. **2-5**, toner cartridge **100** includes a housing **102** having an enclosed reservoir **104** (FIG. **5**) for storing toner. Housing **102** includes a top **106**, a bottom **107**, first and second sides **108**, **109**, a front **110** and a rear **111**. Front **110** of housing **102** leads to during insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22** and rear **111** trails. In one embodiment, each side **108**, **109** of housing **102** includes an end cap **112**, **113** mounted, e.g., by fasteners or a snap-fit engagement, to side walls **114**, **115** of a main body **116** of housing **102**. An outlet port **118** in fluid communication with reservoir **104** is positioned on front **110** of housing **102** near side **109** for exiting toner from toner

cartridge **100**. Housing **102** may include legs **120** on bottom **107** to assist with the insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22** and to support housing **102** when toner cartridge **100** is set on a flat surface. A handle **122** may be provided on top **106** or rear **111** of housing **102** to assist with insertion and removal of toner cartridge **100** into and out of image forming device **22**.

Sides **108**, **109** may each include an alignment guide **124** that extends outward from the respective side **108**, **109** to assist the insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. Alignment guides **124** travel in corresponding guide slots in image forming device **22** that guide the insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. In the example embodiment illustrated, an alignment guide **124** is positioned on the outer side of each end cap **112**, **113**. Alignment guides **124** may run along a front-to-rear dimension (x-dimension in FIG. **2**) of housing **102** as shown in FIGS. **2-4**. In the example embodiment illustrated, each alignment guide **124** includes a wing member **124***a* that runs along the front-to-rear dimension on a respective side **108**, **109** of housing **102**. In the example embodiment illustrated, each alignment guide **124** also includes one or more rounded projections **124***b* formed on the bottom of wing member **124***a*. Rounded projections **124***h* define contact surfaces on the bottom of alignment guide **124** that ride on top of a corresponding guide surface as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22**. However, alignment guide **124** may take many other suitable shapes and forms. For example, in another embodiment, alignment guide **124** includes one or more ribs on each side **108**, **109** of housing **102** that extend along the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102**. In another embodiment, alignment guide **124** includes one or more rounded pegs or projections from each side **108**, **109**, similar to rounded projections **124***b*, that may be spaced from each other along the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102**.

With reference to FIG. **5**, a toner delivery assembly **126** is rotatably mounted within toner reservoir **104** with first and second ends of a drive shaft **128** of toner delivery assembly **126** extending through aligned openings in side walls **114**, **115**, respectively. Bushings may be provided on each end of drive shaft **128** where drive shaft **128** passes through side walls **114**, **115**. A drive train **130** is operatively connected to drive shaft **128** and may be positioned within a space formed between end cap **112** and side wall **114**. Drive train **130** includes a main input gear **132** that engages with a drive system in image forming device **22** that provides torque to main input gear **132**. As shown in FIG. **3**, in one embodiment, a front portion of main input gear **132** is exposed at the front **110** of housing **102** near the top **106** of housing **102** where main input gear **132** engages the drive system in image forming device **22**. With reference back to FIG. **5**, drive train **130** also includes a drive gear **134** on one end of drive shaft **128** that is connected to main input gear **132** either directly or via one or more intermediate gears to rotate drive shaft **128**.

An auger **136** having first and second ends **136***a*, **136***b* and a spiral screw flight is positioned in a channel **138** that runs along the front **110** of housing **102** from side **108** to side **109**. Channel **138** may be integrally molded as part of the front **110** of main body **116** or formed as a separate component that is attached to the front **110** of main body **116**. Channel **138** is generally horizontal in orientation along with toner cartridge **100** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22**. Outlet port **118** is positioned at the bottom of channel **138** so that gravity assists in exiting toner through outlet port **118**. First end **136***a* of auger **136** extends through side wall **114** and a drive gear **137** of drive train **130** is provided on first end **136***a* that is connected to main input gear **132** either directly or via one or more intermediate gears. Channel **138** includes an open portion **138***a* and may include an enclosed portion **138***b*. Open portion **138***a* is open to toner reservoir **104** and extends from side **108** toward second end **136***b* of auger **136**. Enclosed portion **138***b* of channel **138** extends from side **109** and encloses second end **136***b* of auger **136**. In this embodiment, outlet port **118** is positioned at the bottom of enclosed portion **138***b* of channel **138**.

With reference to FIGS. **6** and **7**, toner cartridge **100** includes an electrical connector **140**. In the example embodiment illustrated, electrical connector **140** is positioned on side **108** of housing **102**, below main input gear **132** and below alignment guide **124** on side **108**. However, electrical connector **140** may be positioned in any suitable location on toner cartridge **100**, such as, for example, on side **108** above alignment guide **124**, on side **109**, etc. Electrical connector **140** includes one or more electrical contacts **142** that are positioned to contact corresponding electrical contacts of an electrical connector **300** (FIGS. **10-12**) in image forming device **22** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22** as discussed in greater detail below.

In some embodiments, electrical connector **140** includes a standard connector interface, such as, for example, a Registered Jack (RJ) connector. Electrical connector **140** may include a male plug end of the connector interface or a female socket, port or jack end of the connector interface with electrical connector **300** in the image forming device **22** forming the opposite female or male end of the connector interface. For example, in the example embodiment illustrated in FIG. **6**, electrical connector **140** includes a female socket **144** of an RJ45 connector. In this embodiment, electrical contacts **142** are positioned within a pocket **146** of electrical connector **140** that is sized to receive the corresponding male plug end of electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22**. Pocket **146** includes a forward facing opening **148** at a front end **147** of pocket **146** that faces toward the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**, indicated by the arrow A shown in FIG. **2**. Opening **148** permits the male plug end of electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** to enter pocket **146** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22** as discussed in greater detail below.

A printed circuit board **150** is mounted on housing **102** and electrically connected to electrical contacts **142**. Printed circuit board **150** includes processing circuitry **45**, which may include a processor and associated memory as discussed above. For example, FIG. **8** shows printed circuit board **150** mounted on an inner side of end cap **112**. In this embodiment, printed circuit board **150** is attached to socket **144** with the components of printed circuit board **150** electrically connected to electrical contacts **142**, e.g., by suitable electrical traces and/or wires. It will be appreciated that printed circuit board **150** may be positioned in other suitable locations on toner cartridge **100**, such as, for example, on rear **111** of housing **102**.

In other embodiments, electrical connector **140** includes a custom or non-standard connector interface. For example, FIG. **9** shows an example embodiment where toner cartridge **100** includes an electrical connector **140'** that includes a printed circuit board **150'** positioned within pocket **146** with electrical contacts (not shown) on printed circuit board **150'** exposed within pocket **146** permitting the electrical contacts on printed circuit board **150'** to contact corresponding electrical contacts of the electrical connector in image forming

device **22** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22**. In the example embodiment illustrated, printed circuit board **150'** is positioned on an inner surface of pocket **146** with the electrical contacts exposed and facing inward sideways, i.e., axially inward with respect to drive shaft **128** and auger **136** toward side **109** in the example embodiment illustrated. However, printed circuit board **150'** may be positioned in any suitable location permitting the electrical contacts on printed circuit board **150'** to contact the corresponding electrical contacts of the electrical connector in image forming device **22** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22**.

With reference back to FIGS. **6** and **7**, toner cartridge **100** includes at least one side guide positioned in front of (closer to front **110** of housing **102**) and leading rearward toward electrical contacts **142** of electrical connector **140**. The side guide is positioned ahead of electrical contacts **142** with respect to the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. The side guide positions electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** in a side-to-side dimension (z-dimension in FIG. **2**) of housing **102** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22** as discussed in greater detail below. In the example embodiment illustrated, the side guide includes a pair of guides **160***a*, **160***b* positioned in front of and leading rearward toward opening **148** to pocket **146**. Guides **160***a*, **160***b* are spaced vertically from each other such that guide **160***a* is spaced above (closer to top **106**) guide **160***b* with a gap **161** formed between guide **160***a* and **160***b*. Each guide **160***a*, **160***b* includes an outside surface **162***a*, **162***b* that faces outward sideways, i.e., axially outward from side **108** with respect to drive shaft **128** and auger **136** in the example embodiment illustrated. Each guide **160***a*, **160***b* also includes an inside surface **163***a*, **163***b* that faces inward sideways, i.e., axially inward with respect to drive shaft **128** and auger **136** toward side **109** in the example embodiment illustrated.

Inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* are spaced outward sideways from and face an outer side surface **164** of side **108** of housing **102**. For example, in the embodiment illustrated, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* are spaced outward sideways from and face an outer side surface **164** of end cap **112**. Inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* are unobstructed to permit electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** to contact inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22**. At least a portion of each inside surface **163***a*, **163***b* is angled or tapered inward sideways from front **110** to rear **111** (along the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102** in a direction from front **110** to rear **111**) such that contact between electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** and inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* draws electrical connector **300** inward sideways relative to housing **102**, i.e., axially inward with respect to drive shaft **128** and auger **136** in the example embodiment illustrated, as toner cartridge **100** advances during insertion into image forming device **22**. For example, in the example embodiment illustrated, a front portion **166***a*, **166***b* of each guide **160***a*, **160***b* includes an angled inside surface **163***a*, **163***b* that is angled inward sideways from front **110** to rear **111**. In the embodiment shown, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* are substantially planar; however, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* may instead be curved, rounded, multi-faceted, etc. as they angle or taper inward sideways. In some embodiments, a rear portion **167***a*, **167***b* of each guide **160***a*, **160***b* includes a substantially flat inside surface **163***a*, **163***b* that is not angled sideways from front to rear **111**, i.e., rear portions **167***a*, **167***b* of inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* have a substantially constant position in the side-to-side dimension of housing **102**.

Toner cartridge **100** may include a vertical guide positioned in front of (closer to front **110** of housing **102**) and leading rearward toward electrical contacts **142** of electrical connector **140**. The vertical guide is positioned ahead of electrical contacts **142** with respect to the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. The vertical guide positions electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** in a vertical dimension (y-dimension in FIG. **2**) of housing **102** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22** as discussed in greater detail below. In the example embodiment illustrated, the vertical guide includes a pair of guides **170***a*, **1.70***b* positioned in front of and leading rearward toward opening **148** to pocket **146**. Guide **170***a* is positioned above (closer to top **106**) electrical contacts **142** and guide **170***b* is positioned below (closer to bottom **107**) electrical contacts **142**. Guides **170***a*, **170***b* extend outward sideways from outer side surface **164**. Guides **170***a*, **170***b* are spaced vertically from each other such that guide **170***a* is spaced above (closer to top **106**) guide **170***b* with a gap **171** formed between guide **170***a* and **170***h*. In the example embodiment illustrated, at least a portion of each guide **170***a*, **170***b* is positioned in front of side guides **160***a*, **160***b*. Each guide **170***a*, **170***b* includes a top surface **172***a*, **172***b* that faces upward toward top **106** and a bottom surface **173***a*, **173***b* that faces downward toward bottom **107**.

Bottom surface **173***a* of guide **170***a* and top surface **172***b* of guide **170***b* are ft) unobstructed to permit electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** to contact bottom surface **173***a* and top surface **172***b* as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22**. At least a portion of bottom surface **173***a* and top surface **172***b* may be angled or tapered vertically toward each other from front **110** to rear **111** such that contact between electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** and bottom surface **173***a* and/or top surface **172***b* centers electrical connector **300** vertically with opening **148** as toner cartridge **100** advances during insertion into image forming device **22**. Specifically, at least a portion of bottom surface **173***a* may be angled or tapered downward from front **110** to rear **111** and/or at least a portion of top surface **172***b* may be angled or tapered upward from front **110** to rear **111**. In the example embodiment illustrated, a front portion **176***a* of guide **170***a* includes an angled bottom surface **173***a* that is angled downward from front **110** to rear **111** and a front portion **176***b* of guide **170***b* includes an angled top surface **172***b* that is angled upward from front **110** to rear **111**. In the embodiment shown, bottom surface **173***a* and top surface **172***b* of front portions **176***a*, **176***b* of guides **170***a*, **170***b* are substantially planar; however, bottom surface **173***a* and top surface **172***b* may instead be curved, rounded, multi-faceted, etc. as they angle or taper downward and upward, respectively. In some embodiments, a rear portion **177***a* of guide **170***a* includes a substantially flat bottom surface **173***a* and a rear portion **177***b* of guide **170***b* includes a substantially flat top surface **172***b* that are not angled vertically from front **110** to rear **111**, i.e., rear portions **177***a*, **177***b* of bottom surface **173***a* and top surface **172***b* have a substantially constant position in the vertical dimension of housing **102**.

It will be appreciated that side guides **160***a*, **160***b* and vertical guides **170***a*, **170***b* are not limited to the example configurations illustrated and may take other suitable shapes and forms. For example, in another embodiment, a portion

of a bottom surface of side guide **160***a* is angled downward from front **110** to rear **111** and serves as vertical guide **170***a* and a portion of a top surface of side guide **160***b* is angled upward from front **110** to rear **111** and serves as vertical guide **170***b*.

FIGS. **10-12** show an electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** according to one example embodiment that is configured to operate with electrical connector **140** shown in FIGS. **6** and **7**. In the example embodiment illustrated, electrical connector **300** includes a male plug **302** of an R145 connector. However, as discussed above, electrical connector **300** may include a male or female connector depending on the configuration of electrical connector **140** and may include a standard or custom connector interface. Electrical connector **300** includes one or more electrical contacts **304** positioned on male plug **302** that contact corresponding electrical contacts **142** of electrical connector **140** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22**. Electrical contacts **304** are electrically connected to controller **28** in order to permit communication between processing circuitry **45** and controller **28** when electrical contacts **142** mate with electrical contacts **304**.

Electrical connector **300** is mounted to a frame **306** of image forming device **22** at a position to engage electrical connector **140** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22**. Frame **306** extends along the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. In the example embodiment illustrated, electrical connector **300** is positioned adjacent to side **108** when toner cartridge **100** is installed in image forming device **22**. Electrical connector **300** includes a leading end **308** and a trailing end **309**. The arrow A in FIGS. **10** and **11** indicates the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** and imaging unit **200** into image forming device **22**. Leading end **308** is positioned closer to the direction from which toner cartridge **100** enters image forming device **22** and trailing end **309** is positioned farther from the direction from which toner cartridge **100** enters image forming device **22** such that toner cartridge **100** reaches leading end **308** before reaching trailing end **309** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22**. Male plug **302** and electrical contacts **304** are positioned on leading end **308** of electrical connector **300**.

Electrical connector **300** is movable toward and away from frame **306**, sideways with respect to toner cartridge **100**. Electrical connector **300** is biased inward toward frame **306** and outward sideways with respect to toner cartridge **100**, away from side **108** of housing **102**. In the example embodiment illustrated, an extension spring **310** biases electrical connector **300** toward frame **306**. However, any suitable biasing member may be used. FIG. **10** shows electrical connector **300** in its home, biased position as a result of the bias applied by extension spring **310**. FIG. **11** shows electrical connector **300** pulled away, as indicated by the arrow B, from frame **306**, counter to the bias on electrical connector **300**, in a direction orthogonal to the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22** with electrical connector **300** in its operative position. The bias on electrical connector **300** pulls the electrical connector **300** tight to frame **306** when electrical connector **300** is not engaged with electrical connector **140** of toner cartridge **100** to a recessed position against frame **306** as shown in FIG. **10** in order to protect electrical connector **300** from accidental contact with imaging unit **200**, which may result in damage to electrical connector **300**, during insertion or removal of imaging unit **200** into or from image forming device **22**. The bias on electrical connector **300** also protects electrical connector **300** from damage when the area inside image forming device **22** that houses imaging unit **200** and toner cartridge **100** is serviced or repaired including, for example, when jammed media is removed from this area.

Electrical connector **300** also includes one or more guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* that engage side guides **160***a*, **160***b* as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22** to align male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** in the side-to-side dimension of housing **102** with socket **144** of toner cartridge **100**. Guide wing **312***a* extends upward from a top portion **314** of electrical connector **300** and guide wing **312***b* extends downward from a bottom portion **315** of electrical connector **300**. Guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* are positioned downstream from male plug **302** with respect to the direction of insertion A of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22** as shown in FIGS. **10** and **11**. Each guide wing **312***a*, **312***b* includes an inside surface **318***a*, **318***b* that faces away from frame **306** and inward sideways with respect to toner cartridge **100**, toward side **108**. Each guide wing **312***a*, **312***b* also includes an outside surface **319***a*, **319***b* that faces toward frame **306** and outward sideways with respect to toner cartridge **100**, away from side **108**.

Outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* are positioned to contact inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of electrical connector **140** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22**. In the example embodiment illustrated, each outside surface **319***a*, **319***b* is angled or tapered toward frame **306**, outward sideways with respect to toner cartridge **100**; along the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22** in a manner that corresponds with the angle or taper of inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of electrical connector **140**. For example, in the example embodiment illustrated, a leading portion **320***a*, **320***b* of each guide wing **312***a*, **312***b* includes an angled outside surface **319***a*, **319***b* that is angled toward frame **306**, outward sideways with respect to toner cartridge **100**, along the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**. In the embodiment shown, outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* are substantially planar; however, outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* may instead be curved, rounded, multi-faceted, etc. as they angle or taper. In some embodiments, a trailing portion **321***a*, **321***b* of each guide wing **312***a*, **312***b* includes a substantially flat outside surface **319***a*, **319***b* that is not angled or is only minimally angled relative to frame **306** when electrical connector **300** is in its operative position engaged with electrical connector **140**. It will be appreciated that guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* are not limited to the example configuration illustrated and may take other suitable shapes and forms.

FIGS. **13A-16B** are sequential views illustrating the positioning of electrical connector **140** and electrical connector **300** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22**. FIGS. **13A**, **14A**, **15A** and **16A** are perspective views of end cap **112** of toner cartridge **100** showing the position of electrical connector **300** in image forming device **22** relative to electrical connector **140** as toner cartridge **100** is inserted into image forming device **22** along the direction of insertion indicated by arrow A. The remainder of toner cartridge **100** and frame **306** of image forming device **22** are omitted from FIGS. **13A**, **14A**, **15A** and **16A** for clarity. FIGS. **13B**, **14B**, **15B** and **16B** are schematic views illustrating the position of electrical connector **300** relative to electrical connector **140** when toner cartridge **100** is at each of the positions of toner cartridge **100** shown in FIGS. **13A**, **14A**, **15A** and **16A**. FIGS. **13B**, **14B**, **15B** and **16B** show the

position of frame **306** schematically as a dashed line to aid in illustrating the position of electrical connector **300** relative to frame **306** during insertion of toner cartridge **100**.

FIGS. **13**A and **13**B show the position of electrical connector **300** relative to electrical connector **140** as electrical connector **140** approaches electrical connector **300** during insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**, before side guides **160***a*, **160***h* reach guide wings **312***a*, **312***b*. When toner cartridge **100** is at the position shown in FIGS. **13**A and **13**B, electrical connector **300** is in its biased position shown in FIG. **10**. If male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** is misaligned in the vertical dimension of housing **102** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140** as guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* first reach vertical guides **170***a*, **170***b*, the angled bottom surface **173***a* of guide **170***a* will contact guide wing **312***a* or the angled top surface **172***b* of guide **170***b* will contact guide wing **312***b*. The contact between guide wing **312***a* or **312***b* and bottom surface **173***a* of guide **170***a* or top surface **172***b* of guide **170***b* causes electrical connector **300** to move vertically down or up, respectively, as toner cartridge **100** continues to advance into image forming device **22** as a result of the angles of bottom surface **173***a* of guide **170***a* and top surface **172***b* of guide **170***b* until male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** is aligned in the vertical dimension of housing **102** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140**.

FIGS. **14**A and **14**B show the position of electrical connector **300** relative to electrical connector **140** as toner cartridge **100** advances further into image forming device **22**. As toner cartridge **100** advances to the position shown in FIGS. **14**A and **14**B, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* contact outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b*. As toner cartridge **100** continues to advance, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* slide along outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b*. The angle of inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* creates an inward sideways force relative to housing **102** on electrical connector **300** that overcomes the bias applied to electrical connector **300** causing electrical connector **300** to move away from frame **306** and toward side **108** of toner cartridge **100** until male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** is aligned in the side-to-side dimension of housing **102** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140**. Bottom surface **173***a* of rear portion **177***a* of guide **170***a* and top surface **172***h* of rear portion **177***b* of guide **170***h* maintain the vertical alignment of male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140**.

FIGS. **15**A and **15**B show the position of electrical connector **300** relative to electrical connector **140** as toner cartridge **100** nears the operative position of toner cartridge **100** in image forming device **22**. As toner cartridge **100** advances to the position shown in FIGS. **15**A and **15**B, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* slide past outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* until inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of rear portions **167***a*, **167***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* make contact with outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of trailing portions **321***a*, **321***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b*. As toner cartridge **100** continues to advance, inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of rear portions **167***a*, **167***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***h* slide along outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of trailing portions **321***a*, **321***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b*. Inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of rear portions **167***a*, **167***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* maintain the side-to-side alignment of male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140**.

FIGS. **16**A and **16**B show the final operative positions of electrical connector **300** and electrical connector **140** when toner cartridge **100** is fully installed in image forming device **22**. When toner cartridge **100** is at the position shown in FIGS. **11**.**6**A and **16**B, electrical connector **300** is in the position shown in FIG. **11**. Male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** is positioned inside of pocket **146** of socket **144** of electrical connector **140** with electrical contacts **304** in contact with electrical contacts **142**. The contact between electrical contacts **304** and electrical contacts **142** facilitates communication between controller **28** of image forming device **22** and processing circuitry **45** of toner cartridge **100**. In the embodiment illustrated, the final position of toner cartridge **100** along the direction of insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22** is tightly controlled in order to ensure that male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** is aligned in the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140**.

This sequence is reversed when toner cartridge **100** is removed from image forming device **22**. Male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** withdraws from socket **144** of electrical connector **140**. Electrical connector **300** is guided by side guides **160** and vertical guides **170** as toner cartridge **100** moves opposite its insertion direction. Inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* slide along outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* as the bias applied to electrical connector **300** pulls electrical connector **300** back toward frame **306** and away from side **108** of toner cartridge **100**. Inside surfaces **163***a*, **163***b* of front portions **166***a*, **166***b* of guides **160***a*, **160***b* then disengage from outside surfaces **319***a*, **319***b* of leading portions **320***a*, **320***b* of guide wings **312***a*, **312***b* allowing electrical connector **300** to return to its biased position shown in FIG. **10** where electrical connector **300** is more protected from damage.

With reference back to FIG. **8**, in some embodiments, socket **144** of electrical connector **140** is movable to a limited degree along the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102** in order to allow for deviation in the final position of toner cartridge **100** in image forming device **22** along the direction of insertion A. For example, in the embodiment illustrated, socket **144** is mounted on a plate **180** positioned on the inner side of end cap **112**. Plate **180** is free to move along the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102**. For example, in the embodiment illustrated, plate **180** includes a pair of elongated slots **182***a*, **182***b* that each receive a post, such as a screw **183***a*, **183***b*, fixedly positioned on the inner side of end cap **112**. The elongated shapes of slots **182***a*, **182***b* permit plate **180** to move forward and rearward relative to end cap **112** with screws **183***a*, **183***b* positioned therein. The engagement between screws **183***a*, **183***b* and slots **182***a*, **182***b* limits the forward and rearward travel of plate **180** relative to end cap **112**. Plate **180** and, in turn, socket **144** are biased forward toward front **110** of housing **102**. For example, in the embodiment illustrated, plate **180** includes a pair of flexible legs **184***a*, **184***b* composed of a resilient material, such as a resilient plastic, and positioned against a rear wall **186** on the inner side of end cap **112**. However, any suitable biasing member may be used. If toner cartridge **100** continues to travel in its direction of insertion A after socket **144** of electrical connector **140** has fully received male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** during insertion of toner cartridge **100** into image forming device **22**, plate **180** and socket **144** move rearward relative to

housing **102** as a result of the force on socket **144** from male plug **302** causing legs **184***a*, **184***b* to flex against rear wall **186**. Once toner cartridge **100** reaches its final position in image forming device **22**, the bias applied to plate **180** and socket **144** by legs **184***a*, **184***b* ensures that male plug **302** remains fully inserted in socket **144** thereby aiding in controlling the alignment of male plug **302** of electrical connector **300** with socket **144** of electrical connector **140** in the front-to-rear dimension of housing **102**.

Although the example embodiments discussed above include an electrical connector, such as electrical connector **140** or **140'**, positioned on toner cartridge **100**, it will be appreciated that an electrical connector having positioning features like side guides **160***a*, **160***b* and vertical guides **170***a*, **170***b* may be used on any replaceable unit of image forming device **22**, such as, for example, imaging unit **200** and/or fuser **37** in order to establish communication between controller **28** and processing circuitry **44** and/or processing circuitry **46**. Further, although the example embodiment shown in FIG. **2** includes a pair of replaceable units in the form of toner cartridge **100** and imaging unit **200**, it will be appreciated that the replaceable unit(s) of image forming device **22** may employ any suitable configuration as desired. For example, in one embodiment, the main toner supply for image forming device **22**, developer unit **202**, and cleaner unit **204** are housed in one replaceable unit. In another embodiment, the main toner supply for image forming device **22** and developer unit **202** are provided in a first replaceable unit and cleaner unit **204** is provided in a second replaceable unit. Further, although the example image forming device **22** discussed above includes one toner cartridge **100** and corresponding imaging unit **200**, in the case of an image forming device configured to print in color, separate replaceable units may be used for each toner color needed. For example, in one embodiment, the image forming device includes four toner cartridges and four corresponding imaging units, each toner cartridge containing a particular toner color (e.g., black, cyan, yellow and magenta) and each imaging unit corresponding with one of the toner cartridges to permit color printing.

The foregoing description illustrates various aspects of the present disclosure. It is not intended to be exhaustive. Rather, it is chosen to illustrate the principles of the present disclosure and its practical application to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the present disclosure, including its various modifications that naturally follow. All modifications and variations are contemplated within the scope of the present disclosure as determined by the appended claims. Relatively apparent modifications include combining one or more features of various embodiments with features of other embodiments.

The invention claimed is:

1. A toner cartridge, comprising:

a housing having a top, a bottom, a front, and a rear positioned between a first side and a second side of the housing, the housing has a reservoir for holding toner;

an outlet port in fluid communication with the reservoir and facing downward on the front of the housing for exiting toner from the toner cartridge;

a channel running along the front of the housing between the first side and the second side in fluid communication with the outlet port, at least a portion of the channel is open to the reservoir;

an auger positioned in the channel and extending along the front of the housing between the first side and the second side, the auger includes a rotational axis and is operative to move toner in the channel toward the outlet port;

an electrical contact on the first side of the housing for contacting a corresponding electrical contact in the image forming device when the toner cartridge is installed in the image forming device, the electrical contact is electrically connected to processing circuitry mounted on the housing; and

a first and a second guide on the first side of the housing each positioned closer to the front of the housing than the electrical contact and leading rearward toward the electrical contact, the first guide is spaced above the second guide with a gap between the first guide and the second guide, the first guide includes a first inside surface and the second guide includes a second inside surface, the first and second inside surfaces face axially inward relative to the rotational axis of the auger, the first and second inside surfaces face inward sideways toward an outer side surface of the first side of the housing, the first and second inside surfaces are spaced outward sideways from the outer side surface of the first side of the housing with a gap between each of the first and second inside surfaces and the outer side surface of the first side of the housing, at least a portion of each of the first and second inside surfaces is angled axially inward relative to the rotational axis of the auger in a direction from the front to the rear.

2. The toner cartridge of claim **1**, wherein the electrical contact is positioned within a pocket on the first side of the housing, the pocket includes a frontward facing opening permitting an electrical connector in the image forming device to enter the pocket when the toner cartridge is installed in the image forming device.

3. The toner cartridge of claim **1**, further comprising a top vertical guide and a bottom vertical guide on the first side of the housing each positioned closer to the front of the housing than the electrical contact and leading rearward toward the electrical contact, the top vertical guide is spaced above the bottom vertical guide with a gap between the top vertical guide and the bottom vertical guide, the top vertical guide includes a bottom surface that faces a top surface of the bottom vertical guide.

4. The toner cartridge of claim **3**, wherein at least a portion of the bottom surface of the top vertical guide is angled downward in the direction from the front to the rear and at least a portion of the top surface of the bottom vertical guide is angled upward in the direction from the front to the rear.

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